THE HILLMAN

AN UNUSUAL LOVE STORY

By E. PHILLIPS OPPENHEIM

LOUISE HAS A CURIOUS EXPERIENCE WITH THE BACHELOR BROTHER AND SHE STARTS A LITTLE FLAME BURNING IN THE SOUL OF ONE

Synopsis.—On a trip through the English Cumberland country the breakdown of her automobile forces Louise Maurel, a famous London actress, to spend the night at the farm home of John and Stephen Strangewey. At dinner Louise discovers that the brothers are woman-hating recluses.

CHAPTER III.

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Louise awoke the next morning filled with a curious sense of buoyant expectancy. The sunshine was pouring into the room, brightening up its most somber corners. It lay across the quilt of her bed, and seemed to bring out the perfume of lavender from the pillow on which her head reposed.

Aline, hearing her mistress stir, hastened at once to her bedside.

"It is half-past nine, madam, and your breakfast is here. The old imbecile from the kitchen has just brought it up."

Louise looked approvingly at the breakfast tray, with the home-made bread and deep-yellow butter, the brown eggs and clear honey. The smell of the coffee was aromatic. She breathed a little sigh of content.

"How delicious everything looks!" she exclaimed.

"The home-made things are well enough in their way, madam," Aline agreed, "but I have never known a household so strange and disagreeable. That M. Jennings, who calls himself the butler—he is a person unspeakable, a savage!"

Louise's eyes twinkled.

"I don't think they are fond of women in this household, Aline," she remarked. "Tell me, have you seen Charles?"

"Charles has gone to the nearest blacksmith's forge to get something made for the car, madam," Aline replied. "He asked me to say that he was afraid he would not be ready to start before midday."

"That does not matter," Louise declared, gazing eagerly out of the casement window. Immediately below was a grass-grown orchard which stretched upward, at a precipitous angle, toward a belt of freshly plowed field; beyond, a little chain of rocky hills, sheer overhead. The trees were pink and white with blossom; the petals lay about upon the ground like drifted snowflakes. Here and there yellow jonquils were growing among the long grass. A waft of perfume stole into the room through the window which she had opened.

"Fill my bath quickly, Aline," Louise ordered. "I must go out. I want to see whether it is really as beautiful as it looks."

Aline dressed her mistress in silence. Then, suddenly, a little exclamation escaped her. She swung round toward her mistress, and for once there was animation in her face.

"But, madam," she exclaimed, "I have remembered! The name Strangewey. Yesterday morning you read it out while you took your coffee. You spoke of the good fortune of some farmer in the north of England to whom some relative in Australia had left a great fortune—hundreds and thousands of pounds. The name was Strangewey, the same as that. I remember it now."

She pointed once more to the family tree. Louise sat for a moment with parted lips.

"You are quite right, Aline. I remember it all perfectly now. I wonder whether it could possibly be either of these two men?"

Aline shook her head doubtfully.

"It would be unbelievable, madam," she decided. "Could any sane human creatures live here, with no company but the sheep and the cows, if they had money—money to live in the cities, to buy pleasures, to be happy? Unbelievable, madam!"

Louise remained standing before the window. She was watching the blossom-laden boughs of one of the apple trees bending and swaying in the fresh morning breeze—watching the restless shadows which came and went upon the grass beneath.

"That is just your point of view, Aline," she murmured; "but happiness—well, you would not understand. They are strange men, these two."

Louise found her way without difficulty across a cobbled yard, through a western gate set in a red-brick wall, into the orchard. At the farther end she came to a gate, against which she rested for a moment, leaning her arms upon the topmost bar. Before her was the little belt of plowed earth, the fresh, pungent odor of which was a new thing to her; a little way to the right, the rolling moorland, starred with clumps of gorse; in front, across the field on the other side of the gray stone wall, the rock-strewn hills. The sky—unusually blue it seemed to her, and dotted all over with little masses of fleecy, white clouds—seemed somehow lower and nearer; or was she, perhaps, higher up?

She lingered there, absolutely bewildered by the rapid growth in her brain and senses of what surely must be some newly kindled faculty of appreciation. There was a beauty in the world which she had not felt before.

She turned her head almost lazily at the sound of a man's voice. A team of horses, straining at a plow, were coming round the bend of the field, and by their side, talking to the laborer who guided them, was John Strangewey. She watched him as he came into sight up the steep rise. He walked in step with the plowman by his side, but without any of the laborer's mechanical plod—with a spring in his footsteps, indeed, pointing with his stick along the furrow, so absorbed in the instructions he was giving that he was almost opposite the gate before he was aware of her presence. He promptly abandoned his task and approached her.

"Good morning! You have slept well?" he called out.

"Better, I think, than ever before in my life," she answered. "Differently, at any rate. And such an awakening!" He looked at her, a little puzzled. The glow upon her face and the sunlight upon her brown hair kept him silent. He was content to look at her and wonder.

"Tell me," she demanded impetuously, "is this a little corner of fairyland that you have found? Does the sun always shine like this? Does the earth always smell as sweetly, and are your trees always in blossom? Does your wind always taste as if God had breathed the elixir of life into it?"

He turned around to follow the sweep of her eyes. Something of the same glow seemed to rest for a moment upon his face.

"It is good," he said, "to find what you love so much appreciated by someone else."

They stood together in a silence almost curiously protracted. Then the plowman passed again with his team of horses and John called out some instructions to him. She followed him down to earth.

"Tell me, Mr. Strangewey," she inquired, "where are your farm buildings?"

"Come and I will show you," he answered, opening the gate to let her through. "Keep close to the hedge until we come to the end of the plow; and then—but no, I won't anticipate. This way!"

They reached the end of the plowed field and, passing through a gate, turned abruptly to the left and began to climb a narrow path which bordered the boundary wall, and which became steeper every moment. As they ascended, the orchard and the long, low house on the other side seemed to lie almost at their feet. The road and the open moorland beyond, stretching to the encircling hills, came more clearly into sight with every backward glance. Louise paused at last, breathless.

"Is it the home of the fairies you are taking me to?" she asked. "If you have discovered that, no wonder you find us ordinary women outside your lives!"

He laughed.

"There are no fairies where we are going," he assured her.

They were on a roughly made road now, which turned abruptly to the right a few yards ahead, skirting the side of a deep gorge. They took a few steps further, and Louise stopped short with a cry of wonder.

Around the abrupt corner an entirely new perspective was revealed—a little hamlet built on a shoulder of the mountain; and on the right, below a steep descent, a wide and sunny valley. It was like a tiny world of its own, hidden in the bosom of the hills. There was a long line of farm buildings, built of gray stone and roofed with red tiles; there were fifteen or twenty stacks; a quaint, whitewashed house of considerable size, almost covered on the

They Stood Together in a Silence Almost Curiously Protracted.

southward side with creepers; a row of cottages, and a gray-walled inclosure—stretching with its white tombstones to the very brink of the descent—in the midst of which was an ancient church, in ruins at the farther end, partly rebuilt with the stones of the hillside.

Louise looked around her, silent with wonder. "It isn't real, is it?" she asked, clinging for a moment to John Strangewey's arm.

"Why not? You asked where the land was that we tilled. Now look down. Hold my arm if you feel giddy."

She followed the wave of his ash stick. The valley sheer below them, and the lower hills on both sides, were parceled out into fields, inclosed within stone walls, reminding her from the height at which they stood, of nothing so much as the quilt upon her bed.

Her eyes swept this strange tract of country backward and forward. She saw the men like specks in the fields, the cows grazing in the pasture like toy animals. Then she turned and looked at the neat row of stacks and the square of farm buildings.

"I am trying hard to realize that you are a farmer and that this is your life," she said.

He swung open the wooden gate of the churchyard, by which they were standing. There was a row of graves on either side of the prim path.

"Suppose," he suggested, "you tell me about yourself now—about your own life."

"My life, and the world in which I live, seem far away just now," she said quietly. "I think that it is doing me good to have a rest from them. Talk to me about yourself, please."

He smiled. He was just a little disappointed.

"We shall very soon reach the end of all that I have to tell you," he remarked. "Still, if there is anything you would like to know—"

"Who were these men and women who have lived and died here?" she interrupted, with a little wave of her hand toward the graves.

"All our own people," he told her.

She studied the names upon the tombstones, spelling them out slowly.

"The married people," he went on, "are buried on the south side; the single ones and children are nearer the wall. Tell me," he asked, after a moment's hesitation, "are you married or single?"

She gave a little start. The abruptness of the question, the keen, steadfast gaze of his compelling eyes, seemed for a moment to paralyze both her nerves and her voice. It was as if someone had suddenly drawn away one of the stones from the foundation of her life. She found herself repeating the words on the tombstone facing her:

"And of Elizabeth, for sixty-one years the faithful wife and helpmate of Ezra Cummings, mother of his children, and his partner in the life everlasting."

Her knees began to shake. There was a momentary darkness before her eyes. She felt for the tombstone and sat down.

CHAPTER IV.

The churchyard gate was opened and closed noisily. They both glanced up. Stephen Strangewey was coming slowly toward them along the flinty path. Louise, suddenly herself again, rose briskly to her feet. Stephen had apparently lost none of his dourness of the previous night. As he looked toward Louise, there was no mistaking the slow dislike in his steely eyes.

"Your chauffeur, madam, has just returned," he announced. "He sent word that he will be ready to start at one o'clock."

Louise, inspired to battle by the almost provocative hostility of her elder host, smiled sweetly upon him.

"You can't imagine how sorry I am to hear it," she said. "I don't know when, in the whole course of my life, I have met with such a delightful adventure or spent such a perfect morning!"

Stephen looked at her with level, disapproving eyes—at her slender form in its perfectly fitting tailored gown; at her patent shoes, so obviously unsuitable for her surroundings, and at the faint vision of silk stockings.

"If I might say so without appearing inhospitable," he remarked, with faint sarcasm, "this would seem to be the fitting moment for your departure. A closer examination of our rough life up here might alter your views. If I do not have the pleasure of seeing you again, permit me to wish you farewell."

He turned and walked away. Louise watched him with very real interest.

"Do you know," she said to John, "there is something about your brother a little like the prophets in the Old Testament, in the way he sees only one issue and clings to it. Are you, too, of his way of thinking?"

"Up to a certain point, I believe I am," he confessed.

"Do you never feel cramped—in your mind, I mean?—feel that you want to push your way through the clouds into some other life?"

"I feel nearer the clouds here," he answered simply.

They were leaving the churchyard now. She paused abruptly, pointing to a single grave in a part of the churchyard which seemed detached from the rest.

"Whose grave is that?" he inquired.

He hesitated.

"It is the grave of a young girl," he told her quietly. "She was the daughter of one of our shepherds. She went into service at Carlisle, and returned here with a child. They are both buried here."

"Because of that her grave is apart from the others?"

"Yes," he answered. "It is very seldom, I am glad to say, that anything of the sort happens among us."

For the second time that morning Louise was conscious of an unexpected upheaval of emotion. She felt that the sunshine had gone, that the whole sweetness of the place had suddenly passed away. The charm of its simple austerity had perished.

"And I thought I had found paradise!" she cried.

She moved quickly from John Strangewey's side. Before he could realise her intention, she had stepped over the low dividing wall and was on her knees by the side of the plain, neglected grave. She tore out the spray of apple blossom which she had thrust into the bosom of her gown, and placed it reverently at the head of the little mound. For a moment her eyes drooped and her lips moved—she herself scarcely knew whether it was in prayer. Then she turned and came slowly back to her companion.

Something had gone, too, from his charm. She saw in him now nothing but the coming dourness of his brother. Her heart was still heavy. She shivered a little. It was he at last who spoke.

"Will you tell me, please, what is the matter with you, and why you placed that sprig of apple blossom where you did?"

His tone woke her from her lethargy. She was a little surprised at its poignant, almost challenging note.

"Certainly," she replied. "I placed it there as a woman's protest against the injustice of that isolation."

"I deny that it is unjust."

She turned around and waved her hand toward the little gray building.

"The Savior to whom your church is dedicated thought otherwise," she reminded him. "Do you play at being lords paramount here over the souls and bodies of your serfs?"

"You judge without knowledge of the facts," he assured her calmly.

Louise's footsteps slackened.

"You men," she sighed, "are all alike! You judge only by what happens. You never look inside. That is why your justice is so different from a woman's. I do not wish to argue with you; but what I so passionately object to is the sweeping judgment you make—the sheep on one side and the goats on the other. That is how man judges; God looks further. Every case is different. The law by which one should be judged may be poor justice for another."

She glanced at him almost appealingly, but there was no sign of yielding in his face.

"Laws," he reminded her, "are made for the benefit of the whole human race. Sometimes an individual may suffer for the benefit of others. That is inevitable."

"And so let the subject pass," she concluded; "but it saddens me to think that one of the great sorrows of the world should be there like a monument to spoil the wonder of this morning. Now I am going to ask you a question. Are you the John Strangewey who has recently had a fortune left to him?"

He nodded.

"You read about it in the newspapers, I suppose," he said. "Part of the story isn't true. It was stated that I had never seen my Australian uncle, but as a matter of fact, he has been over here three or four times. It was he who paid for my education at Harrow and Oxford."

"What did your brother say to that?"

"He opposed it," John confessed, "and he hated my uncle. He detests the thought of any one of us going out of sight of our own hills. My uncle had the wander fever."

"And you?" she asked suddenly.

"I have none of it," he asserted.

A very faint smile played about her lips.

"Perhaps not before," she murmured; "but now?"

"Do you mean because I have inherited the money? Why should I go out like a Don Quixote and search for vague adventures?"

"Because you are a man!" she answered swiftly. "You have a brain and a soul too big for your life here. You eat and drink, and physically you flourish, but part of you sleeps because it is shut away from the world of real things. Don't you sometimes feel it in your very heart that life, as we were meant to live it, can only be lived among your fellow men?"

He looked over his shoulder, at the little cluster of farm buildings and cottages, and the gray stone church.

"It seems to me," he declared simply, "that the man who tries to live more than one life fails in both. There is a little cycle of life here, among our thirty or forty souls, which revolves around my brother and myself. A passer-by may glance upward from the road at our little hamlet, and wonder what can ever happen in such an out-of-the-way corner. I think the answer is just what I have told you. Love and marriage, birth and death happen. These things make life."

Her curiosity now had become merged in an immense interest. She laid her fingers lightly upon his arm.

"You speak for your people," she said. "That is well. But you yourself?"

"I am one of them," he answered—"a necessary part of them."

"How you deceive yourself! The time will come, before very long, when you will come out into the world; and the sooner the better, I think, Mr. John Strangewey, or you will grow like your brother here among your granite hills."

He moved a little uneasily. All the time she was watching him. It seemed to her that she could read the thoughts which were stirring in his brain.

"You would like to say, wouldn't you," she went on, "that this is a useful and an upright life? So it may be, but it is not wide enough or great enough. Some day you will feel the desire to climb. Promise me, will you, that when you feel the impulse you won't use all that obstinate will power of yours to crush it? You will destroy the best part of yourself, if you do. You will give it a chance? Promise!"

She held out her hand with a little impulsive gesture. He took it in his own, and held it steadfastly.

"I will remember," he promised.

Along the narrow streak of road, from the southward, they both watched the rapid approach of a large motor-car. There were two servants upon the front seat and one passenger—a man—inside. It swung into the level stretch beneath them, a fantasy of gray and silver in the reflected sunshine.

Louise had been leaning forward, her head supported upon her hands. As the car slackened speed, she rose very slowly to her feet.

"The chariot of deliverance!" she murmured.

"It is the prince of Seyre," John remarked, gazing down with a slight frown upon his forehead.

She nodded. They had started the descent and she was walking in very leisurely fashion.

"The prince is a great friend of mine," she said. "I had promised to spend last night, or, at any rate, some portion of the evening, at Raynham castle on my way to London."

He summoned up courage to ask her the question which had been on his lips more than once.

"As your stay with us is so nearly over, won't you abandon your incognito?"

"In the absence of your brother," she answered, "I will risk it. My name is Louise Maurel."

"Louise Maurel, the actress?" he repeated wonderingly.

"I am she," Louise confessed. "Would your brother," she added, with a little

"I Placed It There as a Woman's Protest Against the Injustice of That Isolation."

grimace, "feel that he had given me a night's lodging under false pretenses."

John made no immediate reply. The world had turned topsyturvy with him. Louise Maurel, and a great friend of the prince of Seyre! He walked on mechanically until she turned and looked at him.

"Well?"

"I am sorry," he declared bluntly.

"Why?" she asked, a little startled at his candor.

"I am sorry, first of all, that you are a friend of the prince of Seyre."

"And again, why?"

"Because of his reputation in these parts."

"What does that mean?" she asked.

"I am not a scandalmonger," John replied dryly. "I speak only of what I know. His estates near here are systematically neglected. He is the worst landlord in the country, and the most unscrupulous. His tenants, both here and in Westmoreland, have to work themselves to death to provide him with the means of living a disreputable life."

"Are you not forgetting that the prince of Seyre is a friend of mine?" she asked stiffly.

"I forget nothing," he answered. "You see, up here we have not learned the art of evading the truth."

She shrugged her shoulders.

"So much for the prince of Seyre, then. And now, why your dislike of my profession?"

"That is another matter," he confessed. "You come from a world of which I know nothing. All I can say is that I would rather think of you—as something different."

She laughed at his somber face and patted his arm lightly.

"Big man of the hills," she said, "when you come down from your frozen heights to look for the flowers, I shall try to make you see things differently."

CHAPTER V.

Once more that long, winding stretch of mountain road lay empty under the moonlight. Up the long slope, where three months before he had ridden to find himself confronted with the adventure of his life, John Strangewey jogged homeward in his high dogcart. The mare, scenting her stable, broke into a quick trot as they topped the long rise. Suddenly she felt a hand tighten upon her reins. She looked inquiringly around, and then stood patiently awaiting her master's bidding.

It seemed to John as if he had passed from the partial abstraction of the last few hours into absolute and entire forgetfulness of the present. He could see the motorcar drawn up by the side of the road, could hear the fretful voice of the maid, and the soft, pleasant words of greeting from the woman who had seemed from the first as if she were very far removed indeed from any of the small annoyances of their accident.

"I have broken down. Can you help?"

He set his teeth. The poignancy of the recollection was a torture to him. Word by word he lived again through that brief interview. He saw her descend from the car, felt the touch of her hand on his arm, saw the flash of her brown eyes as she drew close to him with that pleasant little air of familiarity, shared by no other woman he had ever known.

Then the little scene faded away, and he remembered the tedious present. He had spent two dull days at the house of a neighboring land owner, playing cricket in the daytime, dancing at night with women in whom he was unable to feel the slightest interest, always with that faraway feeling in his heart, struggling hour by hour with that curious restlessness which seemed to have taken a permanent place in his disposition. He was on his way home to Peak Hall. He knew exactly the welcome which was awaiting him. He knew exactly the news he would receive. He raised his whip and cracked it viciously in the air.

Stephen was waiting for him, as he had expected, in the dining room. The elder Strangewey was seated in his accustomed chair, smoking his pipe and reading the paper. The table was laid for a meal, which Jennings was preparing to serve.

"Back again, John?" his brother remarked, looking at him fixedly over his newspaper.

John picked up one or two letters, glanced them over, and flung them down upon the table. He had examined every envelope for the last few months with the same expectancy, and thrown each one down with the same throb of disappointment.

"As you see."

"Had a good time?"

"Not very. Have they finished the barley fields, Stephen?"

"All in at eight o'clock."

There was a brief silence. Then Stephen knocked the ashes from his pipe and rose to his feet.

"John," he asked, "why did you pull up on the road there?"

There was no immediate answer. The slightest of frowns formed itself upon the younger man's face.

"How did you know that I pulled up?"

"I was sitting with the window open, listening for you. I came outside to see what had happened, and I saw your lights standing still."

"I had a fancy to stop for a moment," John said; "nothing more."

John Strangewey is able to stand this kind of dissatisfaction with life for just so long. Then he takes the bit in his teeth and goes tearing away.

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

LAST OF THE CARIB INDIANS

Not More Than One Hundred of Race Which Columbus Found in West Indies Are Still Alive.

The Carib Indian was the first representative of Lo, the poor red man, to meet the tide of European travel. He was the one found by Columbus and the later Spanish explorers in the West Indies, and he has given the Caribbean sea his name. Thus he is assured a monument as long as geography shall last, and he needs it, because as a living race he has practically disappeared.

How many thousands of Caribs dwelt in the West Indies in 1492 is largely a matter of conjecture. They quickly began to die out under the hand of the conqueror, who worked them as slaves and shot them when they made war. Today it is doubtful whether there are 100 pure-blooded Caribs alive. Practically all of them live on the British isle of Dominica, on a reservation set apart for them called Salybia.

The reservation is very difficult of access, for there is no sheltered harbor or landing place. The only method of approach is by one of the coasting steamers which circle the island. When the steamer gets opposite Salybia with anyone who wants to land aboard, she stops and whistles. If the weather is good and the water smooth enough, a canoe puts out and takes the passenger ashore. If the weather is too rough the passenger must needs content himself to go on around the island and try again on the next round.

A Model Man.

Adam, the first, was a man of lovable disposition and a model husband, so I am informed by the recorders of early events. Never once in the recollection of his biographers did he speak ill of his beloved soulmate in the presence of human company, and according to those who were able to know all his private affairs he never kicked on her cooking nor growled at her housework.

Whether she wore her gowns high cut or low in the neck was a matter of little or no concern to him so long as she was respectably attired in the fashion of the period. And when she got fired from the Palm Garden for nibbling apples without someone's consent Adam did not sneak off to Reno, as husbands do today, to apply for a divorce. No. He cast aside his overalls, threw up his job and went out with the little lady like a little man. That's the kind of a spareribs he was! —Zim, in Cartoons Magazine.

The Essentials of Gardening.

The essentials for successful gardening on a small or large scale are soil, water and cultivation. Much depends also on the grower, the season and the crops selected.

The soil is the storehouse of plant-food. The garden, therefore, should contain humus or rotted material in large quantities. The gardener should remember that about 50 per cent of ordinary earth is not soil at all, but consists of air and water.

Water makes plantfood that is present freely soluble. Rain and snow-water are soft and contain ammonia. The magic of soft water on the plant world is one of the miracles of good gardening, as everyone who has contrasted the effect of rain with that produced by sprinkling with a hose realises. Plants are succulent and contain large amounts of water which they have to draw from the soil.

Beware.

When a fellow doesn't come through for the grocer every so often, his food is likely to cause an unsettled condition of the stomach.—Indianapolis Star.

W. N. U., ST. LOUIS, NO. 41--1917.

Experience is what you know after making a fool of yourself.

Not Very Strong.

The husband of a prominent woman always reminds one of the tail of a paper kite.

MUST NOT BOTHER EDISON

Visitors Not Permitted to Intrude on Great Inventor When He Is Busy at His Experiments.

Thomas A. Edison's favorite pursuit is chemistry. Even as a boy telegraphist getting his first start toward a career, this inclination was manifest in his experiments with batteries and electric devices, and it still remains his greatest pleasure, observes an exchange.

His new laboratory is splendidly equipped. Every known substance ranging through all the kingdoms of matter from lanthanum to shark's teeth and including over 200,000 specimens, is kept on hand for immediate availability. It is a collection of over 30 years' standing, encouraged from time to time by prizes for new additions offered by the inventor to his men.

His own laboratory table is never, in any circumstances, allowed to be touched. A notice posted on the doorway reads to the effect that Mr. Edison is not to be disturbed in the course of his experiments except for matter of the utmost importance. So fond is he of his beloved pastime that he declares his idea of heaven is to be able to continue it, and his injunctions to his staff are: "When I die I want my table forwarded to me by wireless."

A Possible Reason.

"Beanborough always looks on the bright side of things."

"Why?"

"Well, the other day I went with him to buy a pair of shoes. He didn't try them on at the store, and when he got home he found that a nail was sticking right up through the heel of one."

"Did he take them back?"

"Not much. He said that he supposed the nail was put there intentionally to keep the foot from sliding forward in the shoe."

What He Cared For.

Willie—Pa, I'll be sorry when you get well.

Pa—Why, my son?

Willie—Because I won't get any more empty medicine bottles to sell.